

## **Abstract**

Ethical decision-making in school administration has received considerable attention in educational leadership literature. However, most research has focused on principals working in secondary school settings while studies that explore ethical reasoning processes of academic deans have been significantly few. This qualitative study aims to describe the ethical decision-making processes employed by a select group of Filipino college deans in solving ethical dilemmas using the ethical paradigms proposed in the works of Starratt (Educ Adm Q 27:185–202, [1991](#)) and Shapiro and Stefkovich (Ethical leadership and decision-making in education: applying theoretical perspectives to complex dilemmas, [2005](#)) as frameworks for the analysis. Data was gathered using semi-structured interviews and field text was analyzed using deductive thematic analysis. Findings of this study show that majority of the deans chose to share ethical dilemmas involving students and teachers. The findings also show the ethical frameworks of care, justice, and profession as the dominant paradigms utilized by Filipino deans and their preference for adopting multiple ethical frameworks when making their decisions. Most of the ethical dilemmas which the deans narrated relate to their tasks of academic administration such as monitoring student performance, faculty evaluation and maintaining school discipline. Interestingly, only a few dilemmas involving university administrators were expressed, and dilemmas that refer to broader societal issues usually associated with school administrators' utilization of the ethic of critique were also significantly left out in the narratives of this study. This paper intends to contribute to current literature by expanding research to administrators working in the context of higher education in the Philippine setting. The findings of this study could serve as knowledge base in designing ethics courses to enhance educational leaders' ethical decision-making skills. The study also provides useful insights of ethical decisions and reasoning processes employed by academic administrators in resolving real life ethical dilemmas that could be useful at the practical level for aspiring and practicing deans.